Court Information Office
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ASTAR

MEDIA ADVISORY

Judges from Maryland and Across U.S. Head to Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine in Baltimore For Hands-on, Interactive Science School

WHO: About 220 judges, including jurists from Maryland, who are members of the Advanced Science and Technology Adjudication Resource (ASTAR) center, will participate in the 2007 ASTAR National Judges' Science School (JSS), "Neuroscience and Bio-Behavioral Technologies."

WHAT: Cosponsored by the Judicial Institute of Maryland and The Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine and funded solely by public funds from a grant from the Bureau of Justice Assistance, U. S. Department of Justice and assistance from the National Institute of Drug Abuse and the National Human Genome Research Institute of the National Institutes of Health, the JSS prepares judges to manage better cases involving complex science and medical issues.

The JSS will feature interactive sessions and hands-on laboratory work with brain cells and tissues. Judges, it is hoped, will now have a better grounding in bioscience and biotechnology to prepare for cases that may appear in future litigation or alternative dispute resolution cases. Topics in the area of neuroscience will include: brain development, neuroimaging, antisocial personality, neuro-engineering, insanity defense, the dementias and brain stem cells.

(**Editor's Note**: See the next page for a sample of program highlights that are potential still photography and video opportunities and http://www.mdcourts.gov/windowsmedia/astarvnr.wmv for video news release. Media are invited to attend the sessions, but attendance must be coordinated in advance. For more information and to receive credentialing for the event, call the Court Information Office at (410) 260-1488.)

WHEN: **October 5-7, 2007**

WHERE: **The Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine and the Radisson Lord Baltimore Hotel**

DETAILS: The national Judges Science School will introduce participating jurists to the technologies currently adapted by biomedical science to understand the function of the human brain and to characterize the state of the science underpinning such technologies. The workshops will focus on scientific methodology, enabling trial and appellate judges to appreciate novel evidentiary claims and valid scientific and technical proofs. By 2010, ASTAR hopes to certify at least 700 resource judges across the United States and in jurisdictions around the world. Maryland, Ohio and Washington will serve as a resource for judge preparation for other jurisdictions nationally and internationally.

CALL: Darrell S. Pressley or Sally W. Rankin, Court Information Office, (410) 260-1488. Due to security and space limitations, credentialed media who want to attend must contact the Court Information Office by 4:30 p.m. on Wednesday, October 3, 2007. Cameras are welcome.

ASTAR program highlights

Friday, October 5, 2007 (To be held at the Radisson Lord Baltimore Hotel)

Gross Neuroanatomy Studio*

1:30 p.m. Guided by JHMI neurosurgery residents and fellows, a series of case vignettes making claims about brain injury, illness, mis-wiring or genetic defect will be presented. Brain slices will be examined and larger-than-life brain models will be capable of disassembly. This lab will be repeated hourly through 4:30 p.m.

* The above series of case vignettes will be repeated at 10 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. on Saturday.

Saturday, October 6, 2007 (To be held at JHU School of Medicine)

Neuroscience and Technology Mini Electives (The sessions will be held at 2:30 p.m.)

The State of Neuroimaging Research and PET Scans

Largely inadmissible until recently in court because of its experimental nature, the session's instructor will demonstrate the kind of evidentiary exhibits typically produced by Positron Emission Tomography (PET) Scans. Judges will discuss whether, in right case, would they order PET for confirmation of dangerousness or recidivism or propensities toward sexually predatory conduct.

Operationalizing the Insanity Defense

Judges will discuss the substantial uncertainty, which confronts the insanity defense in an era of encroaching neuroscience. Judges will discuss the extent to which insanity defenses raised in their courtrooms introduced novel evidence.

Neuro-engineering; implants and other prostheses

What is the current state of the science and the technology assessment of brain implants and prostheses holding promise of overcoming brain-based disabilities such as vision loss, hearing loss, movement disorders and other prominent deficits resulting from aberrant development, genetic risks or injuries? Judges will discuss when could/should brain prostheses be ordered by the court?

The Dementias

The dementias come in many forms and our instructor will provide a classification by developmental age. The role of neuroimaging in diagnosis and prediction of the dementias will be featured. Judges will be asked to consider whether drug, radiation, laser, deep brain stimulation or transcranial magnetic stimulation were found effective in preventing dementias and thereby lengthening the period of lucid competence they would order a petitioner to undergo one or more such treatments.

Sunday, October 7, 2007 (To be held at JHU School of Medicine)

Antisocial Personality

11 a.m. What are the indicators of "antisocial personality?" What are some of the contributing factors to the development of this syndrome? What is the nature of emerging research that may lead to effective interventions? Judges will share experiences about case adjudication involving people with this syndrome

This program has been supported by sub-grants to the Johns Hopkins University Medical Institutions from the ASTAR National Resource Judge Program (AAA Project) supported solely by the Bureau of Justice Assistance, Office of Justice Programs, U. S. Department of Justice, cooperative agreement number 2006-DD-BX-K378. The content of the program does not necessarily reflect the positions or opinions of the Bureau of Justice Assistance, U.S. Department of Justice.